

Draft_rev5, **Sri Chinmoy Heart-Garden Two-Mile Race and Observance**
Tuesday, Oct 10th, 2017, 10am
H.E. Ambassador Davidson Hepburn
President of the 35th General Conference of UNESCO
Founding Executive Director, Government Public Policy Institute
University of the Bahamas, Nassau

Distinguished Guests and Dear Friends,

I am extremely happy and honoured to be here with you today at this auspicious ceremony at the **Sri Chinmoy Heart-Garden**.

This **wonderful garden**, plus the **Sri Chinmoy Street**, where today's race was held, were **dedicated**

- **on October 11, 2006, by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation,**
- **in celebration of Sri Chinmoy's life and his love of running, exactly one year before his passing.**

It has been eleven years now, and I am delighted to be here to pay tribute to my dear friend Sri Chinmoy

- who dedicated his life for the **noble goals of world-peace and oneness.**

For me, Sri Chinmoy was **more than a friend; he was a lover of peace** and a servant of God. He always had a **glow of peace and love from deep within.**

I first met Sri Chinmoy in **1978 while serving as Ambassador of the Bahamas** to the United Nations.

Sri Chinmoy went to the UN twice a week starting **in 1970 when Secretary-General U Thant requested** him to offer silent **peace prayers and meditations for delegates and staff of all faiths.**

The Peace Meditation at the United Nations, which Sri Chinmoy continued until his passing in 2007, **gave me and many other ambassadors and UN leaders much inner peace and strength.**

Sri Chinmoy was an **innovator for peace**—all that he created was done with the goal of **encouraging peace to grow within the hearts and lives of individuals**, thereby fostering world-peace.

I have been indeed **privileged to take part** many times in the Sri Chinmoy **Oeness-Home World Harmony and Peace Runs** which he **began in 1987**.

I have **seen hundreds of children** in my own home country of the Bahamas, in **Kazakhstan** and elsewhere, run with **boundless joy and enthusiasm** – certain that they can make a difference for peace.

Each and **every child** who holds the flaming peace torch **will remember that moment** his entire life.

As **President of the 35th General Conference of UNESCO**, one of my main goals was to **foster a culture of peace**.

I found **natural partners** amongst the many people working with **Sri Chinmoy's international peace initiatives**.

They **bring millions of world citizens into active service** for the peace of our common planet.

As we think of the United Nations proclaimed Sustainable Development Goals (**SDGs**) – **these 17 Global Goals** - we know the “**oneness-world**” **vision** that Sri Chinmoy encouraged **adds energy and enthusiasm** to practical steps required.

Few may serve directly at **UN Organizations**,

- but **all can share the willingness** to work towards the implementation of these 17 special goals
- based upon an **understanding of our interdependence** and common home. *For example,*

- **Goal 3: Good health and well-being** which this park so beautifully supports;
- **Goal 10: Reduce inequalities among countries** (we must have at least 20 countries represented here today);
- **Goal 16: Peace, Justice** (so many of us **cherish** these...

Soon **after Sri Chinmoy's passing** in 2007, people from different countries had the inspiration to **create peace monuments** in the form of a statue of Sri Chinmoy as a **vibrant reminder to continue** his grassroots efforts for world peace.

Indeed, we have **so few role models** for young people **yet Sri Chinmoy was an excellent example** of what one **individual can do for peace**.

The first **statue** of Sri Chinmoy was placed in **Oslo in 2008** with many other statues coming later.

These monuments can be **seen throughout the year, inspiring his message and spirit of peace**

– **silently inviting all** to offer their good will and a personal prayer for peace.

Many of the **outdoor spaces like this one,**

- **are in beautiful, peaceful locations** that **inspire people**

- to meditate and **to bring to the fore their own deepest aspirations.**

I pray that we **each become messengers** for peace,

- runners within and without, to make this **world of ours a oneness-home.**

May I close with the words from

*Sri Chinmoy's **Heart Garden: A Book of Aphorisms for Joy and Inspiration:***

“The language of the heart

Is the only language

That everybody can understand.”

~ Sri Chinmoy